

Intervention: Support for breastfeeding in the workplace

Finding: Sufficient evidence for effectiveness

Potential partners to undertake the intervention:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofits or local coalitions | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Businesses or labor organizations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Schools or universities | <input type="checkbox"/> Media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health care providers | <input type="checkbox"/> Local public health departments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> State public health departments | <input type="checkbox"/> Policymakers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitals, clinics or managed care organizations | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |

Background on the intervention:

Support for breastfeeding in the workplace consists of employee benefits and services geared towards breastfeeding mothers. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), these interventions include corporate policies to support breastfeeding women; teaching employees about breastfeeding; providing designated private space for breastfeeding or expressing milk; allowing flexible scheduling to support milk expression during work; giving mothers options for returning to work, such as teleworking, part-time work, and extended maternity leave; providing on-site or near-site child care; providing high-quality breast pumps; and offering professional lactation management services and support.

Findings from the systematic reviews:

The CDC Guide to Breastfeeding Interventions categorizes these interventions under “Evidence-based interventions.”

Initial evaluations indicate that support for breastfeeding in the workplace increases the duration of breastfeeding. However, it is unclear whether these results are generalizable.

Several studies also indicate that workplace support for lactation not only benefits mothers; it also benefits employers in the form of improved productivity and staff loyalty; enhanced public image of the employer; and decreased absenteeism, health care costs, and employee turnover.

Limitations/Comments:

The recommendations in this priority area are largely informed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Guide to Breastfeeding Interventions. Although the CDC report draws heavily on the reviews of the Cochrane Collaboration, a well-respected source of research in public health, its methodology for categorizing interventions is not outlined explicitly.

References:

Shealy KR, Li R, Benton-Davis S, Grummer-Strawn LM. The CDC Guide to Breastfeeding Interventions. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2005. Available online at: http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/pdf/breastfeeding_interventions.pdf